

# 2009 Legislative Session Update

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District



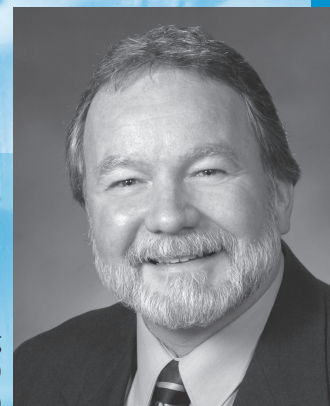
### Senator Randi Becker

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#### Committees:

Higher Education and Workforce Development  
(*Ranking Republican*)  
Agriculture and Rural Economic Development  
Health and Long-Term Care  
Transportation



### Representative Jim McCune

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#### Committees:

General Government Appropriations (*Ranking Republican*)  
Capital Budget  
Technology, Energy and Communications  
Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving you in the Washington State Senate. We are nearly halfway through the 2009 legislative session, and I'm hard at work looking out for your interests in Olympia.

While I've made progress building good working relationships with my fellow legislators, there remains a looming problem that the Legislature has yet to fully address. Years of government overspending has resulted in our state facing a budget deficit of over \$8 billion.

There are some in Olympia who feel that raising your taxes is an appropriate solution to this problem. I want you to know that this is not acceptable.

I believe that by working together, legislators can find a real solution to the problem without new taxes or too many program cuts, while still protecting the most vulnerable in our society. After that, we must work to craft a new budget that is both responsible and sustainable.

I look forward to meeting you at one of our town hall events, and please know that you are always welcome to come visit me in Olympia. I always enjoy hearing your questions or concerns, so please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Randi Becker  
State Senator

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are in the midst of our 2009 legislative session that will run to April 26. My greater concerns as your state lawmaker are our sagging state economy and serious budget shortfall. Never before has it been more important for state lawmakers to preserve and create jobs, and get the state's finances back in order without raising taxes. This includes prioritizing state government by focusing on education, public safety, transportation, and protection of our most vulnerable citizens.

We must also assist our seniors and veterans. Seniors have spent their lifetimes building and enriching the great communities we enjoy today, and veterans continue to protect them by their efforts here and abroad. We owe these important groups a debt of gratitude, and that's why I'm proud to support measures like **House Bill 1764** which would offer property tax relief for seniors, persons retired because of physical disability and veterans.

The decisions made by the Legislature this year will impact our state for years to come. While the work ahead for state lawmakers won't be easy, it's nothing compared to what so many families are facing today. I welcome you to be a part of the legislative process and always look forward to hearing from you. If I can ever be of assistance, please contact me.

It's an honor to serve you in the Washington State House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Jim McCune  
State Representative





## Representative Jim McCune

2<sup>nd</sup> Legislat

# 2009 Legislative

### Ensuring a no-new-taxes budget

Our state operating budget pays for public schools, human services, higher education, prisons, natural resources, and judicial and government operations. As I write this newsletter, the shortfall for our next two-year budget cycle is estimated at \$8 billion. But this is predicted to increase by the time state lawmakers vote on a final budget in late April.

To say this budget shortfall is the result of a sagging economy is only part of the story. We cannot forget that state spending has increased by 33 percent – more than \$8 billion – the last four years. If the majority party and governor had shown fiscal discipline, our problem would be smaller today. A lot is made about how bad California's budget problem is but, per capita, our state is even worse off.

State lawmakers now have two options — limit the size and scope of state government or raise taxes. I think you know where I stand — I support a no-new-taxes approach. Unfortunately, there are proposals being considered that would raise your taxes —including a bill that would establish a state income tax.

We cannot expect families and employers to bail out the poor decisions of state government. Instead, our budget problem offers our state an opportunity to commit to a more prioritized, efficient state government. And that's what we must do.



### Helping our veterans

Few people sacrifice more for our communities than the hard-working personnel of our armed services. I'm so fortunate to represent many of these great servicemen and servicewomen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. As a member of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs, I'm leading efforts to pass legislation that will assist our veterans. Here are just a few of the bills on which I'm working:

**House Bill 1156** – would create a preference in the alternative route teacher certification programs for veterans and National Guard members.

**House Bill 1478** – would start a new vehicle registration year when the registered owner is a member of the United States armed forces and has been stationed outside Washington state.

**House Bill 1876** – would establish the Disabled Veterans Assistance Account and allow vehicle owners to make voluntary donations of \$5 for initial or renewal registrations.

**House Bill 1877** – would establish the Disabled Veterans Assistance Account and direct the department of licensing to issue a special license plate displaying a symbol or artwork with the words, "In God We Trust."



### Supporting traditional marriage

I support traditional marriage, between one man and one woman, and the state's Defense of Marriage Act. This act was passed with bipartisan support in 1998. It defines marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman, and says that Washington state is not required to recognize same-sex marriages from other states.

There are five bills that have been introduced which would undermine traditional marriage — **House Bills 1616, 1727 and 1745, and Senate Bills 5674 and 5688**. I'm against these measures. You may track these bills online by going to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>



# Session Update



## Finding funding for South Sound transportation

Transportation issues are vitally important to the people of Pierce and Thurston counties. After all, if we can't get to work on time or move our products to market, we're put at a significant disadvantage. Serving on the Senate Transportation Committee, I've been focused on finding ways to get projects in our district funded and moving forward without raising your taxes. Our state is already facing a budget deficit of over \$8 billion, and taxing you even more to make

up the funding shortfall is not the right answer.

That's why I'm working in a lead position with a coalition of other south Puget Sound-area legislators who want to see more of the current transportation funds spent in our backyard instead of watching your tax dollars flow to other transportation projects. There are equally important projects in our area that are desperately needed and ready to begin.

## Get involved!

Contact me to be added to our e-mail list and visit my Web site,

[www.SenateRepublicans.wa.gov/Becker](http://www.SenateRepublicans.wa.gov/Becker), for updates.

***This is your government!***

## More opportunities for higher education

You may know that I'm the ranking Republican on the Senate Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee. This session, we've been listening to a lot of public testimony about the future of public colleges and universities in Washington.

I've learned that students who have parents who are relatively well off can afford to go to college, and there are already programs for disadvantaged students to get a higher education, as well. However, many middle-income families in Washington are being overlooked.

This portion of our population often can't afford to pay tuition, but has an income that doesn't qualify them for assistance programs. I'm looking for ways to help every student in Washington have access to higher education, and I'm confident that we'll be able to work together toward achieving that goal.



## Agriculture in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District

Another issue that is very important to our district is agriculture and the preservation of farmland. As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, representing the interests of the farmers and growers in Pierce and Thurston counties is one of my top priorities.

This session, I sponsored **Senate Bill 5817**, which protects horse boarders, farmers, people who raise pigs and cattle, and other agri-business owners from being overtaxed. The state Department of Revenue recently discovered unclear language in state law that had property owners worried county governments may try to collect taxes from which they were previously exempt. The department is working to correct the vague language and my bill, if passed, would make it law. I'll keep you updated on the bill's progress, and you can see other bills that I've sponsored on my Web site.

**Representative  
Jim McCune**

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District

**Senator  
Randi Becker**

## Please join us at a town hall meeting

## Saturday, March 14

**9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

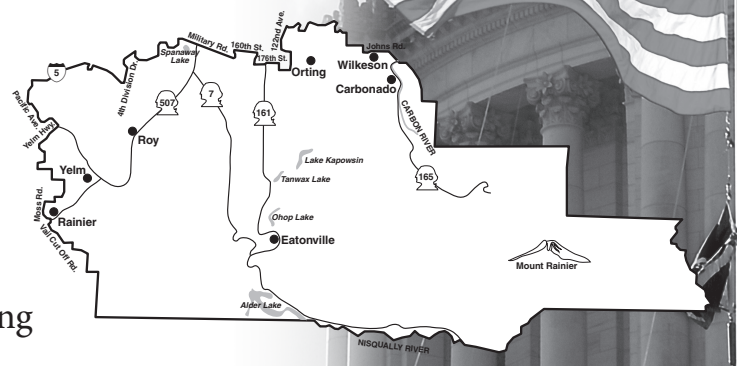
Rosemont Assisted Living  
215 Killion Road NW – Yelm

### 11:00 a.m. to noon

Central Pierce Fire and Rescue #60  
17520 22nd Avenue East – Spanaway

**1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Orting Senior Center  
120 North Washington Avenue – Orting



Olympia, WA 98504-0600

P.O. Box 40600

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Jim McCune**

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Randi Becker**

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